



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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November 20, 2009

Dear Senator:

The Coalition on Human Needs urges you to vote in favor of the motion to proceed to debate on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, H.R. 3590. The Coalition is an alliance of more than 100 national organizations including service providers, faith groups, labor, civil rights, policy, and low-income advocacy organizations. CHN's 2009 Public Policy Priorities includes the organization's approved position in support of health care reform legislation. Written well before Congress drafted its legislation this year, it calls for reforms similar to the provisions included in H.R. 3590. Here are the positions we took at the beginning of 2009:

The Coalition on Human Needs supports guaranteed affordable, high quality health care for every person. CHN supports reforms that build on and improve our current health care system, while assuring every person – adults and children - has access to care, via either a public program, employer-sponsored insurance, or a new group insurance pool. Coverage should be made affordable by offering sliding scale subsidies for low- and moderate-income families. Strong rules should hold insurance companies accountable to play fair, so families can receive coverage no matter where they live and whether or not they have a pre-existing medical condition. Medicaid eligibility should be strengthened and expanded so eligibility is based on need, rather than on family status. CHN supports policies that improve prevention and wellness, including support for mental health and substance abuse services, affordable prescription drugs, an improved Medicare program, and a strong public health system. CHN supports expanding, updating, and reauthorizing The Indian Health program to meet the special needs of its target population.

The Coalition on Human Needs opposes efforts to restrict access to care or shift more of the costs of health care to those least able to afford it. CHN opposes restrictions on availability of coverage and care for immigrants, and unnecessary documentation requirements that create barriers to healthcare for citizens and immigrants.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act does not realize these goals perfectly. While the bill provides coverage for an additional 31 million people, it does not achieve health care coverage for everyone and restricts coverage options for segments of the immigrant community. We hope that as the legislation moves forward there will be opportunities to make improvements that protect and expand access to coverage and that strengthen the affordability provisions for the lowest-income people.

Every day we delay fixing our broken health care system brings unconscionably high costs – in needless sickness and death and in unsustainable economic burdens. You are fortunate in having this historic opportunity to take our nation such an important step forward. The Coalition on Human Needs urges you to vote yes.

Sincerely yours,



Ellen S. Teller
Chair, CHN Board of Directors
Director of Government Relations
Food Research and Action Center



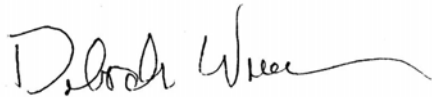
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